

Advice #1

Draft

From: Ron LaFayette, Chair, on Behalf of the Northgate Stakeholders Group
To: Mayor Greg Nickels and Members of the Seattle City Council

**Subject: STAKEHOLDERS ADVICE #1: OPEN SPACE AND DRAINAGE
OPTIONS FOR SOUTH LOT DEVELOPMENT**

The Northgate Framework Resolution directed that the Northgate Stakeholders Group be established to advise the City on four issues. This report outlines the response of the Stakeholders Group to three South Lot open space and drainage options presented to it by Seattle Public Utilities. This is an issue that a number of the Stakeholders Group members have been involved with for many years.

The three options subject to SPU intensive review and to Stakeholder discussion are the **daylight, hybrid** and **natural system** options. (See attached description of the three options). The purpose of the Stakeholders has been to guide and counsel SPU and the City regarding community responses to these options, including values and criteria that might be utilized to help determine which would be most beneficial. **By a very wide majority (17 to 4¹), the members of Northgate Stakeholders Group prefer the hybrid option.** The process we utilized to arrive at this conclusion and additional comments on this advice are detailed below.

The Stakeholder Review Process:

Stakeholders participated in seven separate sessions (including four formal Stakeholder Group meetings) to review and discuss the information provided by SPU and to arrive at its recommendation:

- On March 15, four Group members participated in a Brown Bag discussion with the SPU technical team which provided detailed information on costs and the results of flooding analyses for the options under consideration.
- On March 18, we received a presentation from SPU on the analytical process it was using to evaluate the options.
- On April 20, we received additional information from SPU. To aid in their deliberation, Group members further requested a glossary of terms; a three-dimensional rendering of the options; an accounting of costs of proposed cement retaining walls; and more detailed information on water quality filtration and drainage benefits of each option. (Responses to each of these questions were provided on

¹ One seat was not represented at this meeting.

May 11.) Individual Stakeholders Group members also introduced additional criteria for option review to augment the Benefits Chart prepared by SPU. These included educational, visual, aesthetic, cultural, and recreational impacts of each option, and level of community buy-in.

- On April 27, 13 Group members participated in a late afternoon meeting with SPU staff and consultants to hear the results of the water quality analysis of the options; a tour of stormwater treatments at other sites followed the presentation and discussion.
- On May 11, we discussed three specific questions asked by SPU, more clearly defined values and criteria associated with their decision making (in addition to those already provided in the SPU Benefits Chart) and took a straw poll indicating the very strong support for the hybrid proposal.
- On May 13, we hosted a Community Open House in which citizens viewed informational displays on the three options, heard from Stakeholder panels, and made written or oral comments. They participated in similar discussion processes regarding Lorig development plans and Northgate area transportation planning. With regard to South Lot Open Space and Drainage options, virtually all written and oral comments favored the hybrid option.
- On May 20, we completed our review of the three options and approved this report of their actions for transmission to the City and its citizens.

Advice to the City:

Seattle Public Utilities asked three questions to help delineate the advantages and disadvantages of the three options under review. These questions related to the preferred depth of the open space from the surrounding streets; the desirability of maintaining year-round water flow from the site; and the relative merits of various types of water quality gains projected for the three options.

We decided to consider these three questions in the context of several values that we discussed, including:

Moving water- We believe the option selected should provide year-round flow of water. This would be provided by the daylight and hybrid options but not by the natural systems option.

Aesthetics- Related to the desire for moving water, the site should be aesthetically pleasing. As presented, all three options meet this test, though concern was expressed whether the natural systems option would provide sufficient water to maintain plantings and vegetation.

Safety- We are comfortable that all three options meet safety concerns. Relevant measures include maintaining medium grade embankments and providing sightlines from neighboring apartments. We are comfortable with the depth of the hybrid option (18 feet) relative to the natural systems option (12 feet).

Pedestrian movement- All three options provide excellent access for pedestrians.

Water quality- The hybrid option is superior to the other two options in its water quality impact in that removes pollutants from drainage over a much larger portion of the Northgate sub-basin.

In our judgment, the hybrid option performs well under the SPU Benefits Chart and in the context of these five values. We recommend its adoption.

(section for minority comment if desired)